

Duxbury Inns

(The following article is printed as it was first published in the Jan. 7, 1960 Clipper -- Ed.)

Miss Sabina Marshall, Mrs. Elmer Glass, Miss Annie Dunham, Henry Hurd, and Police Chief Earl Chandler shed further light on Duxbury inns and boardinghouses of yesteryear.

The Marshall Dwinell house on the corner of Washington St. and Fort Hill Lane was the Hollis House until about 1905 when it became the Duxbury Inn.

Mrs. Elmer Glass has a pamphlet with an ad of the old Hollis House which describes it as "pleasantly situated on Duxbury Bay. Every facility for bathing, boating, gunning and fishing. Convenient and well ventilated rooms. Good table. Prompt and careful attention to the welfare and comfort of guests. Terms reasonable. Coaches meet all trains. Fine livery stable connected. Charles Price, owner (formerly of the Somerset Club and The Bachelors' Quarters)." This ad appeared in the Duxbury Directory and History in 1894.

Its History

According to Miss Sabina Marshall, Clifton Dwinell bought the Duxbury Inn and turned it into a private residence. He was the father of Marshall Dwinell, the present owner, and of Mrs. Elizabeth Wallace of Sunset Rd. Miss Marshall once had a photograph of the property showing a sign which read Duxbury Inn. In the photo was the late William Redmond as a boy. Across the street was the Bos'n's Locker, which was then a post office.

In days when Duxbury was dry, liquor was sneaked into the inn via a hidden staircase behind a chimney with a huge fireplace where whole hams were roasted on a pit. (Henry Briggs, father of Fire Chief Eben Briggs, operated the "fine livery stable connected" and kept his stagecoaches in the barn attached to the inn.)

Clifton Dwinell, who summered in Nantucket until he could no longer stand the roar of the surf, received a letter from a woman who had lost a silver chain a decade earlier while staying at the inn. Workmen found the chain while repairing the building, and Mr. Dwinell returned it to its owner. He also owned the present William J. Powell dwelling, which he sold to the Rev. Smith. The previous owner of the Duxbury Inn was Maurice Chandler (a man named King was manager when he acquired it in 1905). After selling it to Clifton Dwinell, he took over the former Old Brunswick House on the southwest corner of Harrison and Washington streets (now owned by his son Roscoe) from Frederick Hunt, who had run a lodging house and livery stable. From 1915 until 1923, Maurice Chandler operated the building as the Bayside Inn. Opposite it was the former Franklin Hotel, later known as the Colonial Inn when Albert Carroll was manager. This is the famed "Tweed House" now owned by Dr. Edwin Leonard.

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Powder Point Hall

Powder Point School, where Alger Hiss prepped for Johns Hopkins University, included the present Snug Harbor Sailors' Home and several other buildings. Grove House, which was razed by Walter Prince (a graduate of the school, along with Henry Hurd, who remembers Hiss well) after the school closed, stood where the old cannon is now. The gray shingled dwelling next to the King Caesar House (owned by the Weber-Fulops) was called "The Cottage." The house behind King Caesar House (where the late Herman Smith, author of STINA, once lived), was part of the school which also boasted a science building. The area through which Moulton Rd. was cut to Powder Point Ave., including the John Nathan house site, contained a cinder track and athletic fields.

The site included 4 tennis courts and a 4-hole golf course after the school authorities let the cows out of the pasture and the bull in.

The Founder

Frederick Knapp, who founded the school, which used to successfully compete in athletics with such schools as Milton Academy, St. Mark's and Thayer Academy, lived in King Caesar House, once the home of Ezra Weston. Knapp also owned big tracts on Powder Point and off Bay Rd., including the land through which Bay Ridge Lane was sliced. One of the biggest landowners in Plymouth County, he also owned the beautiful yellow colonial house just above the Pilgrim Maiden statue in Plymouth, and all the land adjacent on the street side to Plymouth Lumber Co. A Harvard graduate, Frederick Knapp was a noted mathematician. His daughter, Elizabeth Knapp, lives on Washington St. next to the Baptist Church.

R.K. Bearce, who was headmaster of Powder Point School when Henry Hurd was a student, ran the school as a summer hotel known as Pilgrim Hall. (Anyone recall the first name of Manager Reed?) Bearce's successor, who was also headmaster of Tabor Academy, found the dual role role too exacting, and Powder Point School closed during the Roaring Twenties. Among the graduates were John Burns of Duxbury and the late Gordon Heath, brother of Milan Heath of Cove St.

One Minute Please

Duxbury's boarding houses prospered during the summer. Sally B. Taylor's is now the Robert Stanton Fox domicile on King Caesar Rd. The Ralph Lawson Sr. house on Washington St., near Bluefish River, was once a boarding house run by Anna and Emily Sears. The residence on the corner of Washington St. and Sunset Rd., which Dr. Gillis Turner sold to the Robert Yeagly, was formerly operated as the St. George House by an inkeeper named George Scott. The Arthur Thornhill house on Washington St. was in days gone aglimmering Mrs. Bannister's boarding house. (Her first name?) Farther down Washington St. on the right as you head for Hall's Corner, is another converted boarding house whose proprietor was Frederick Wadsworth. Later known as the Ina Whitechurch house, it is now owned by Dr. John Merrick.